

CONGESTIVE HEART FAILURE

- is a condition where your heart cannot pump enough blood to meet your body's needs.

Causes

Heart failure often develops after other conditions have damaged or weakened your heart. The following conditions can cause heart failure:

- **Coronary artery disease and heart attack** – This is the most common cause of heart failure. This occurs when there is buildup of fatty deposits in the arteries that supply blood to your heart.
- **High blood pressure (Hypertension)** - If your blood pressure is high, your heart has to work harder than it should to circulate blood throughout your body.
- **Faulty heart valves** – A damaged valve forces your heart to work harder to keep blood flowing as it should.
- **Damage to the heart muscle (cardiomyopathy)** – This can be caused by infections, alcohol abuse, and toxic effect of drugs such as cocaine. Lupus can also cause damage to the heart muscle.
- **Myocarditis** – This is an inflammation of the heart muscles which is commonly caused by a virus.
- **Congenital heart defects** – These are heart defects you are born with.
- **Abnormal heart rhythms (heart arrhythmias)** - Abnormal heart rhythms may cause your heart to beat too fast. This creates extra work for your heart.

Types

- **Left-sided heart failure** – This is the most common form of heart failure. Fluid may back up in your lungs which causes shortness of breath.
- **Right-sided heart failure** – This usually occurs with left-sided heart failure. Fluid may back up into your abdomen, legs and feet, causes swelling.

Signs and symptoms

- Shortness of breath (dyspnea)
- Fatigue and weakness
- Swelling (edema) in your legs, ankles and feet
- Swelling of your abdomen (ascites)
- Sudden weight gain from fluid retention
- Lack of appetite and nausea
- Difficulty concentrating or decreased alertness

- Rapid or irregular heartbeat
- Persistent cough or wheezing with white or pink blood-tinged phlegm

Diagnosis

To diagnose heart failure, your doctor will take a careful medical history and perform a physical examination. In addition to that, there are some tests you have to go through such as:

- **Blood tests**
- **Chest X-ray**
- **Electrocardiogram (ECG)**
- **Echocardiogram**
- **Ejection fraction**
- **Stress test**
- **Cardiac computerized tomography (CT) or magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)**
- **Coronary catheterization (angiogram)**

Treatment

- **Heart failure medications**
- **Surgery - Coronary bypass surgery, Heart valve repair or replacement, Heart transplant**
- **Use of medical devices – pacemakers, heart pumps**

Diagnosis

- **Stop smoking**
- **Weigh yourself daily.**
- **Restrict salt in your diet.**
- **Maintain a healthy weight.**
- **Limit fats and cholesterol.**
- **Limit alcohol and fluids.**
- **Be active.**
- **Reduce stress.**

Questions:

1. Give me at least 2 causes of heart failure and briefly explain why they contribute to the development of the disease.

2. What signs would you assess for in a patient with possible congestive heart failure? Give at least 3.
3. What health teachings can you give to your patient with this kind of disease? Give at least 3.